

MRS. LENORE MEDER, HEAD OF PUBLIC WELFARE, SAYS EVERY SINNER HAS A FUTURE.

BY JANE WHITAKER

I met her first in the Juvenile Court one day when I sat thinking over a problem I was called upon to solve.

A man had appealed to me in regard to his children, a boy and a girl. He had told me that the Juvenile Court officers had had him up in court and he had fought for the possession of his children and won, but that once again they were after him, and he realized it would be impossible for him to take care of his children as the Juvenile Court decreed they should be taken care of, so he had decided they should be sent for a few years away from him, but he wanted to pay their board and not have them paupers, and he earned so pitifully little that he was desperate.

And as I thought over the problem, she sat down beside me and we entered into conversation, and without knowing who she was I told her the story.

"Poor thing," she said, pityingly, "send him to me and I will do the best that can be done for him."

And she did that best so well that afterward the man came to me and poured out his gratitude to her. And that was how I met Mrs. Leonora Meder, president of the Catholic Women's Protective League and just appointed by Mayor Harrison head of the Public Welfare Bureau.

Little by little our acquaintance grew and each time I found more to admire. When I wanted some prominent woman to advocate the cause of the waitresses on strike at Henri's, Mrs. Meder was the one woman of many I approached who was not only willing but eager to champion the working girls.

She comes from the sunny South, and it was there that she learned to love her fellowmen. Her mother loved humanity before her to such an extent that she was a martyr to the cause, for one stormy day she insisted upon visiting a woman in trouble, and she contracted pneumonia and died.

Mrs. Meder gained her training in social service work under the direction of Mattie Love, who for forty-four years was head of the Flower Mission in Louisville, Kentucky.

She came to Chicago twelve years ago. She lived at 1045 Rush street for eight years and she worked with the poor here as she had in Louisville. Once she said to me: "I have had many sorrows in my life, and sorrows bring you nearer to the people; they give you understanding."

Seven years ago she became affiliated with the Catholic Women's Protectorate. She is also a member of

the Eli Bates Association and an associate member of Coulter House.

And during this time much of her work has been along the line of the protection of girls.

Once I asked her to tell me why girls go wrong, what are the causes.

She looked at me with a little pain in her eyes, and her lips tightened. Then she said:

"There are no general reasons. Every girl is different. Every girl's life is different. Every girl's temptations are different. Sometimes it is the fault of nature. If the girl had married, she would have been a splendid wife and mother, but lacking the chance to marry she drifted into wrong through the very desire for love, which after all is a natural desire.

"People are just folks," she said. "My sympathies are as much with the bad as the good. Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future."

I thought what a wonderful text that would be for our so-called reformers to consider, "Every saint